

Football Premiership: Aston Villa 3 Arsenal 2

Gregory lays claim to the title deeds

David Laoy at Villa Park

MAYBE Aston Villa are something more than pre-Christmas pretenders. Certainly they are championship material if powers of recovery are anything to go by.

Last Sunday a stunning second-half revival restored John Gregory's team to the top of the Premiership after Manchester United had briefly occupied top spot following Saturday's games. Arsenal's period of travail appeared over when Dennis Bergkamp gave them a 2-0 lead on the stroke of half-time with his second goal of the game, but after Julian Joachim had restored Villa's interest in the contest, Dion Dublin scored twice to bring them a memorable victory in a thoroughly entertaining match.

The victory over the champions and Double winners, and especially the manner in which it was achieved, will have done much to restore confidence among the Villa supporters after only two points had been taken from four games, their previous game, at Chelsea, being lost after Tore Andre Flo grabbed an injury-time winner. Here, Villa simply refused to admit that a revived Arsenal side were their superiors; it was a triumph of stubbornness over anything.

Gregory said: "I believe after the week we have had against Manchester United, Chelsea and Arsenal,

that there are four teams who have the potential to be champions including us."

At the same time Gregory's tactical switches in the second half contributed in no small part to the way his team turned the match around. His introduction of Stan Collymore, who had begun the afternoon on the bench, to augment Dublin and Joachim up front steadily eroded the efficiency of an Arsenal defence which, while lacking the injured Tony Adams, had hitherto resisted Villa's untidy attacks with little difficulty. "My players let me speak at the end but they had also let me speak at half-time. In the first half we played with fear," said Gregory.

For Arsene Wenger the most disappointing aspect of this defeat will be the way his team's organisation at the back crumbled away after Bergkamp and Nicolas Anelka had dominated much of the first half. Arsenal performed some extraordinary tactical contortions in their efforts to regain the initiative, one of which involved Steve Bould spending a period on the left wing.

Having also gone four Premiership matches without a win, Arsenal were as keen as Villa to go for three points, and the commitment of both sides to attack ensured a rewarding spectacle from the outset. Yet Villa struggled to get into the game.

The opening goal, after 14 minutes, stemmed from Freddie Ljung



Rising expectations... Arsenal keeper David Seaman leaps to deny the home side's highest jumper Ugo Ehiogu. PHOTO MICHAEL STEELS

berg, a strong influence in the first half, beating Alan Wright in the air. As the ball bobbed on, Anelka's head flicked it past Gareth Southgate, with Bergkamp surging through to gain possession. The bounce was awkward, the ball just would not come down, but Bergkamp's technique enabled him to beat Michael Oakes with a horizontal volley.

Villa's immediate response was ragged, with little of consequence reaching Dublin, and Joachim's tendency to snatch at everything, wast-

un to the perimeter track. It was the third serious accident at a match involving Arsenal this season. Villa's physio, Jim Walker, was among those who raced to his help.

At Coventry a steward was crushed to death by Arsenal's fans, and during this month's Champions League game in Athens a Panathinaikos supporter suffered a fatal fall from the top of a stand.

Villa appeared to be in a dilemma when the game resumed. If they brought on Collymore, cover would have to be sacrificed somewhere, leaving Arsenal to score a third goal. But Gregory allowed only eight minutes of the second half to pass by before taking off Gareth Barry, now a tired teenager, with drawing Wright to a back four and using Collymore to create a front three.

Had Oakes not dealt snarlingly with a shot from Marc Overmars just before the hour the switch might have been academic. As it was Villa were level by the 65th minute.

First Collymore's run stretched Arsenal at the back, and Lee Feenstra's short square pass set up Joachim for a goal taken from the outside of a foot. Then Joachim's centre from the right set a shot from Dublin blocked. The Thompson prodded the rebound forward, and Dublin move clear of the defence to beat David Seaman. In vain Arsenal claimed, with some justification, that Dublin was off-side.

Either way Villa now sensed they could win a match that only 29 minutes earlier had seemed lost. Sure enough, in the 83rd minute Thompson's corner from the right cleared the keeper Martin Keown, and Dublin had space to control the ball before driving it into the roof of the net.

Athletics

It's lucky 13th for Radcliffe

Duncan Mackay in Ferrara

A GREAT year for British athletes ended on a suitably high note when Paula Radcliffe won the European Cross-country Championships here last Sunday, to claim her first senior title.

The Bedford runner's dominating performance over a field that included Fernanda Ribeiro, the Olympic 10,000 metres champion, took to 13 the number of European titles won by British athletes during 1998.

Radcliffe will always believe it would have been 14 but for the virus she contracted before the European Championships in Budapest which reduced her to a shadow of herself, she finished fifth in the 10,000 metres. "This doesn't totally make up for the summer, but it makes up in a little way," Radcliffe said.

Doubles have played on her mind since that day, four months ago, but they were spectacularly excoriated here in the north Italian city. "I really, really needed to win this," she said. "I knew I was under pressure and didn't really know how I would feel."

It was a signature Radcliffe performance as she took the race to her rivals from the gun. The longer the 5.6 km race lasted the tighter she turned the

screw but, as she entered the last kilometre with Ribeiro, fanned for her apron finish, all an ace shoulder. It looked as if it would be a familiar tale at the end.

Yet even the Portuguese runner was unable to hold on to Radcliffe as the relentless pace took its toll, and she faded to fourth. The last to succumb, in the closing 300m, as Radcliffe won by three seconds were the 1995 champion, and Yugoslavians' Olivera Jevtic, who had beaten Radcliffe in Budapest.



Radcliffe... relentless pace

Double issue for Clinton and Blair

183, No 28
Selling December 27, 1998

Clinton seeks deal to save presidency

North Kettle and Alan Berger in Washington

THE White House this week launched a secret drive to save Bill Clinton's presidency. Just 24 hours after he became the first United States president in 10 years to face a Senate impeachment trial.

A two-day debate in the House of Representatives, delayed after Mr Clinton ordered air strikes against Iraq, at the end of which congressmen voted for two of the House Judiciary committee's articles of impeachment.

Mr Clinton's advisers have begun consultations with Senate Republicans on possible compromise deals, in which the president would be censured and perhaps fined, thus avoiding a trial which some experts could last up to six months. Impeachment and removal of the president from office would require a two-thirds Senate majority.

The Northern Ireland peace-keeper, Senator George Mitchell, a former Senate majority leader, was expected to be called in to sponsor the attempt to strike a deal.

Mr Clinton said last Saturday that he intended to fight to remain in the White House until "the last hour of the last day of my term" and to call for resignations in favour of President Al Gore.

As the president went to church last Sunday with his daughter, Chelsea, the White House chief of staff, John Podesta, said Mr Clinton would not step down. "I think if the president were to resign under these circumstances, it would weaken the presidency, it would weaken the process the Founding Fathers set in place. It would be a bad thing for the president," Mr Podesta said.

The House last Saturday left the Republican party divided at the loss of its second

Speaker in less than two months. The shock resignation of the Speaker-elect, Bob Livingston, only weeks after he forced his predecessor Newt Gingrich to quit, left Congressman Dennis Hastert of Illinois as the front-runner for the post.

Meanwhile Larry Flynt, the publisher whose investigations into congressional sex lives forced Mr Livingston to quit as Speaker, has threatened to release details on up to a dozen other Republicans before Congress reconvenes in January.

As Washington drew breath after four days of tumultuous political crisis amid the now suspended US assault on Iraq, opinion polls showed continued strong ratings for Mr Clinton, but also a rise in those who want him to resign and end the constitutional standoff.

An NBC poll taken after the House vote showed Mr Clinton's support rose from 68 per cent to 72 per cent. But a Newsweek magazine poll showed a rise to 44 per cent of those wanting Mr Clinton to resign. Other polls showed fewer people backing resignation.

There were early hints that some Republicans shared the White House aim of averting a long and humiliating trial which would lock up Congress, presidency and supreme court business.

"There has to be some consideration as to what you do that is the best under the circumstances to resolve this matter in the best interests of the country," Orrin Hatch, the Senate Judiciary committee chairman and a senior Republican, said.

Mr Hatch called on the Senate majority leader, Trent Lott, to conduct a private straw poll of senators to gauge how much damage he could do to Mr Clinton's likely to be a civil war.

The two articles of impeachment cover perjury in Mr Clinton's continued on page 3

Washington Post, page 13



President Clinton leaves church in Washington last Sunday with his daughter Chelsea. PHOTOGRAPH BY WILLIAM PHILLIPS

The Guardian Weekly

In an extraordinary week the US president suffers the humiliation of impeachment while ordering air strikes against Iraq



Mopping-up operation... The deck of the US aircraft carrier Enterprise is swabbed down after the order came to halt air strikes against Baghdad. PHOTOGRAPH BY AP/WIDEWORLD

Iraq faces threat of fresh attacks

Guardian Reporters

BITRAIN and the United States reserved the right to launch fresh attacks on Iraq as the two governments struggled to win international support this week for a policy of containment following four days of intense air strikes against Saddam Hussein's regime.

Tony Blair, ordering the aircraft carrier HMS Invincible to the Gulf, insisted that if Britain and the US had not taken action to keep President Saddam "in his cage" their credibility would have been "reduced to zero".

With unconfirmed reports of thousands of Iraqis killed and injured in Operation Desert Fox and doubts about how much damage had been done to the country's military machine, President Saddam claimed his country had been victorious over the "enemies of God".

Asked what would trigger future action against Iraq, the British prime minister said: "If he [Saddam] poses any threat to the outside world, we will act again." But he acknowledged there was no guarantee that the Iraq leader could be removed.

In hailing the strikes, President Clinton said the 70-hour assault had severely damaged Iraq's ability to build weapons of mass destruction.

But the inspectors of the United Nations Special Commission (Unsc), charged with monitoring and destroying Iraq's banned chemical and biological arsenal, seem unlikely to be allowed to resume work, Iraq's vice-president, Taha Yassin Ramadan, declared that Unsc's mission was over.

"The US secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, said: 'The inspectors have not been able to do their job for the last eight months. We have other means of monitoring, and we reserve the right to use force.'

The US defence secretary, William Cohen, said: "We are going to be in the region, we are going to maintain our military capability, we are going to continue the sanctions and watch to make sure that he doesn't pose a threat to his neighbours or try to reconstitute these programmes."

Iraq's ambassador to the UN, Nizar Hamdoun, said the allied attacks had killed or wounded thousands of people. Previous reports indicated that at least 42 people had been killed and 96 wounded.

Intensive diplomatic activity is now expected to build international support for a new policy of containment, with Britain trying to mend fences with its European partners after resentment over the fact that only Britain acted with the US.

Russia said that the US and Britain had finally shown common sense by halting the attacks, and France and China, also UN Security Council members, urged new efforts to solve the crisis.

Moscow has been incensed that Washington and London disregarded its views over Iraq and bypassed the Security Council, where Russia has the right of veto as one of five permanent members.

President Jacques Chirac of France called for a review of the international oil embargo on Iraq, saying living conditions in Iraq had to be improved urgently.

In Baghdad, the end of the bombing was met with relief by ordinary people. In his second pre-recorded television message in three days, President Saddam, dressed in military uniform, said the air strikes had rekindled the spirit of resistance apparent during the 'Mother of all Battles' — the 1991 Gulf war.

"God wanted it to be an honour, dignity and glory for you in these days and in the day of judgement," he said. "God will make it a disgrace,

dishonour and a great crime in these days and in the day of judgement to those enemies of God and humanity who conspired it."

Under UN resolutions, the economic sanctions imposed after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait cannot be lifted until Unscon certifies that Iraq is free of all nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and long-range missiles. How that is to be done without Unscon remains unanswered.

The Pentagon said 425 Tomahawk cruise missiles were fired during the campaign — more than the number fired in the entire five-week Gulf war to evict Iraq from Kuwait. Iraq says its gunners shot down more than 100 Tomahawks. The offensive involved 650 aircraft missions, including 32 sorties by 12 RAF Tornado fighter-bombers.

World reaction, page 3
Comment, page 10
Le Monde, page 11

China acts to silence dissidents 4

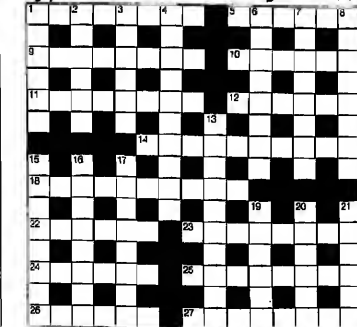
Law lords give Pinochet hope 7

Countdown to the euro's birth 15

Because of distribution problems over the holiday season, we are publishing next week's issue with this one.

Austria	AS20	Malta	SG6
Belgium	BF50	Netherlands	GG
Denmark	DK11	Norway	NK18
Finland	FM10	Portugal	ES00
France	FF14	Saudi Arabia	SR18.60
Germany	DM4.60	Spain	P300
Greece	GR600	Sweden	SK19
Hungary	HUF600	Switzerland	SF8.00
Ireland	IE5.00		

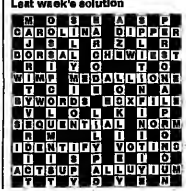
Cryptic crossword by Gordius



- Across**
- Printer's top money-making equipment (5)
 - Settles on 12% feet (5)
 - Woman prepares meals with water (5,3)
 - Place to lay one's head at small house for clergy (15)
 - Reset gives soldiers nothing to swear about (6)
 - This month includes little time very near the middle (6)
 - Putting on airs before getting tight... (10)
 - ... remedy for one who has had one over the eight? (6,4)

- Down**
- Some agreement achieved, but containing little substance (8)
 - Vehicle weight with packaging (5)
 - Furniture that was sat on and broken by a lady? (9)
 - Gold coin initially concealed as a plant (6)
 - It may help to avoid a serious charge (5)
 - Important character of Midwestern establishment (5)
 - Allen called, without a detouring rest (5)

Last week's solution



Nobel winner accused of fabrication

Michael Ellison in New York

THE reputation of a Nobel Peace Prize winner has been badly damaged after the story of her family's struggle against exploitation and oppression was challenged by an academic who retraced her steps.

Rigoberta Menchu, who became a *cause célèbre* for the intellectual left in Europe after escaping from the civil war in Guatemala, was accused of fabricating and exaggerating parts of her autobiography, *I, Rigoberta Menchu*. It includes the death of a brother, Nino, who is still alive.

David Stoll, an anthropologist at Middlebury College, Vermont, said she had drawn on the experiences of others to tell her story. She "dramatically revised the greater experience of her village to suit the needs of the revolutionary organisation she had joined."



Menchu, story challenged

The book, which has been translated into 12 languages, was published in 1982. Ten years before Ms Menchu won the peace prize for her work for social justice and ethno-cultural reconciliation.

Mr Stoll, who spent 10 years researching his book, *Rigoberta Menchu and the Story of All Poor Guatemalans*, says many of the experiences she describes are composites. His work is supported by a New York Times investigation.

But Geir Lundestad, director of the Nobel Institute, said her award was not based exclusively on the book and there was no question of the prize being withdrawn.

Ms Menchu's autobiography centres on her family's struggle against a wealthy elite who tried to steal their land. Mr Stoll says the dispute was a feud between peasant families. Other claims undermined include the death of one brother from starvation and another burnt to death by the Guatemalan army, her assertion that she had no education, and that she was an undercover political organiser.

Ma Menchu, aged 38, has started

to distance herself from the autobiography and refer the inquisitive to Elisabeth Burgos, the former wife of the Guatemalan associate Regis Debray, who collaborated on the work.

"I am the protagonist of the book and it was my testimony but I am not the author," said Ms Menchu. "She [Burgos] gave the book its final form so she is officially the author." But Ms Burgos, who translated 20 hours of tapes for the book, said: "Every phrase comes from what Rigoberta Menchu said."

Few dispute that Ms Menchu's father, mother and two of her brothers were killed during the country's 36-year civil war, which finished in 1996.

Blackburn, Ms Menchu's editor at Verso, writing in her defence, said: "At no point is evidence offered that Menchu lied about the blood-soaked plight of her people even if her account was a partial one."

Pope fires a salvo against consumerism

John Hooper in Rome

THE Pope lashed out at capitalism last week in his strongest renunciation to date of the global economy. He linked the financial crisis to the East Asia with the activities of market speculators, and put the impact of consumerism on a par with those of some of the most odious doctrines of history, including Nazism.

The strictures were contained in a special message issued before World Peace Day, on January 1. His 22-page homily, presented at the Vatican, focused on human rights.

"When human rights are ignored or scorned, and when the pursuit of individual interests unjustly prevails over the common good, then the seeds of instability, rebellion and violence are inevitably sown," he said.

While inveighing against a range of targets, from abortion to small arms proliferation, he left no doubt that he regarded the global economic order as one of the main sources of human rights violations.

"The history of our time has shown in a tragic way the danger which results from forgetting the truth about the human person. Before our eyes we have the results of ideologies such as Marxism, Nazism and fascism, and also of myths like racial superiority, nationalism and ethnic exclusivity."

"No less pernicious, though not always as obvious, are the effects of an individualism which exalts the individual and the selfish satisfaction of personal aspirations become the ultimate goal of life."

Since the fall of communism the Pope has increasingly concentrated his fire on the shortcomings of capitalism and the free market. But he has never gone so far in deploring its consequences.

He writes: "The rapid advance towards the globalisation of economic and financial systems also illustrates the urgent need for guaranteeing the global common good and the exercise of economic and social rights. The free market by itself cannot do this, because in fact there are many human needs which have no place in the market."

He adds: "The effects of the recent economic and financial crises have had human consequences for countless people, reduced to conditions of extreme poverty."

"Many of them had only just reached a position which allowed them to look to the future with optimism. Through no fault of their own, they have seen their hopes cruelly dashed, and they are left for themselves and their children."

"And how can we ignore the effects of fluctuations in the financial markets? We urgently need a new vision of global progress in solidarity, which will enable all people to realise their potential."

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
December 27 1999

Branson aims for record

Richard Branson and his

ICO Global Challenge team

aimed a flawless launch last

night in their attempt to be the

first to circumnavigate the world

by air, writes Will

Stewart in Marrakech.

The 2008 balloon rose above

Marakech in Marrakech, and

was the first to be launched

under the best of conditions, and

headed for the Atlantic mountains.

Branson said the early

start was crucial if he and his

300,000-mile American

and Norwegian

team were to achieve

the last

of the last

of the last

of the last

of the last

of the last

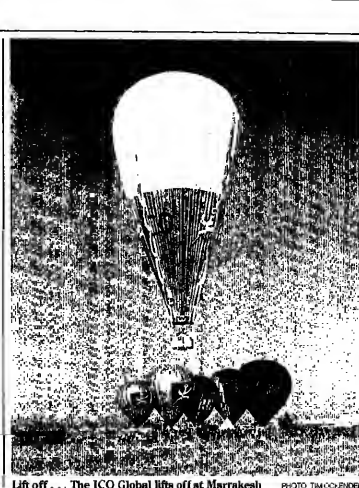
of the last

of the last

of the last

of the last

of the last



Lift off... The ICO Global lift off at Marrakech

Koreans 'take step towards human clone'

Jonathan Watts in Tokyo
and Tim Radford

SOUTH KOREAN scientists last week claimed to have taken the first steps towards cloning a human being. They provoked worldwide alarm by taking the technique that last year to Dolly the sheep — cloned from a "mature" cell — and applying it to a human cell and egg.

Researchers in Britain, Japan and the United States have cloned sheep, mice and cattle from adult cells. There are no federal laws for human embryo research in the US, and embryo experiments in Britain are strictly controlled.

The Korean team has ruled out the idea of cloning human babies. It has described the idea as repugnant and dangerous — it took more than 200 attempts to produce Dolly.

But Lee Boyeon, of Kyunghee University in Seoul, said that his team had cultivated a human embryo in its early stages from a single cell implanted in a woman's ovum. The operation was aborted before the fertilised egg reached foetus stage, to stay within Korean guidelines.

"Our experiment marked the first time the more advanced cloning technology has been applied to human cells and might make human cloning more feasible," Dr Lee said.

The Korean researchers immediately triggered a barrage of condemnation. Protesters in Seoul called the research inhuman. Yukio Tanaka, the Japanese ambassador who cloned twin calves, said: "I have never heard of such an experiment and at the moment I don't believe it is true."

Harry Griffin, from the British team, said the experiment was stopped before proof has been established that the embryo had been reprogrammed.

"We do not believe the Korean group has sufficient scientific evidence to back their claim of having cloned a human embryo," he said. He also rejected Korean claims that the Scottish scientists had done the same thing.



Amsterdam's 'smart shops' sell the natural ingredients of many banned drugs

Photo: PAH / CORBIS

Dutch get to grips with drug shops

Jon Henley in Amsterdam

KOKOPELLI is on the Warmoesstraat in the middle of the red light district, two minutes from the railway station, less than 50 metres from the police station. It is bright and airy with striped pine floors. Tall rear windows overlook a stately 17th century canal, where else it might be a designer clothes shop, this being Amsterdam, it is a designer drug shop.

A year or so ago there were half a dozen of these "smart shops" but now there are more than 150. They pose a problem for the Dutch government, which has Europe's most tolerant and pragmatic drug policy.

How exactly do you deal with a designer drug shop? It is not to mention those little white tablets that are almost, but not quite, Ecstasy?

"Everything we sell here is completely legal," insisted Jeroen Burger, a spokesman for Conscious Dharma, the small but fast-growing company that launched the smart shop craze and recently opened Kokopelli. "OK, the active ingredient in magic mushrooms is on the list of banned drugs. But we don't sell the active ingredient. We sell the natural product."

Natural it may be, but the effect can be as powerful as many outlawed hard drugs. Take, for example, *Psilocybe lanipesans*, the

Magic Truffle, disarmingly described as triggering a "remarkably clear trip, but not too disorienting". Or *Panaeolus cyanescens*, which is "metabolised very quickly, making the trip come on fast and strong". Both cost about \$50 for five. In Mr Burger's words, they amount to "legal hard drugs".

Moving up the scale of natural hallucinogens, Kokopelli also sells an innocent-looking plant called *Salvia divinorum*. It carries a kick like a mule; anyone choosing to smoke it is advised to do so with friends so they can catch the ride.

The Netherlands already has 1,200 famous coffee shops, where the sale of small quantities of marijuana for personal use is tolerated. In the belief that it is better to keep such things out in the open, where they can be supervised, than drive them underground.

In a recent long report, the Dutch health ministry tried to get to grips with the smart-shop phenomenon. It wanted to know whether there were a potentially lethal new development, or merely a kind of alternative chemist, offering "safe" alternatives to banned drugs.

In conclusion, firmly in the Dutch tradition of respect for individual liberty, was that they were "not an unacceptable danger to society". For the time being they will be tolerated, and closely watched.

They need watching closely. Be-

cause smart shops are also engaged in a continual cat-and-mouse game with the authorities over synthetic drugs.

A couple of years ago GHB was banned outright when six Rotterdam teenagers fell into a near-coma after combining it with alcohol.

Within weeks, a laboratory had produced an alternative. Beneath Kokopelli's glass-topped counter, the same white pills — one of them a "psychic" amphetamine. It is sold in sets of two tiny tablets, but begins to act strongly advised to take just one, with a large amount of water. Do not take 2CT2 alone unless you are an experienced user, the handout warns. "Do not take it if you are pregnant, diabetic, have high or low blood pressure, a heart disease, have ever had hepatitis A or B, or have drunk alcohol."

To Mr Burger this is responsible Dutch drug dealing at its best. You see, the danger hardly ever lies in the product itself, but in the person using it," he said.

"We test every product personally, and give detailed information to each buyer. People will buy it any way, and it's far better they do it from us than from some street corner dealer."

That is also, in essence, the policy of the health ministry. But do be careful to follow the instructions.

Pinochet ruling set aside

Dwyer

BRITAIN'S highest court

ruled new ground last week

when it set aside one of

its historic judgments because

of bias against one of the

parties.

The senior judge said an

appeal would be heard

by a different panel of

judges, who could rule that

Gen Pinochet was immune

from prosecution as a former

head of state.

The decision was set aside

after a hearing following a

petition by Gen Pinochet's

lawyers.

The unprecedented blow to the integrity of British justice has sent shock waves through the judiciary, angering senior judges.

The court set aside one of its historic judgments because of bias against one of the parties.

The senior judge said an appeal would be heard by a different panel of judges, who could rule that Gen Pinochet was immune from prosecution as a former head of state.

The decision was set aside after a hearing following a petition by Gen Pinochet's lawyers.

The court set aside one of its historic judgments because of bias against one of the parties.

The senior judge said an appeal would be heard by a different panel of judges, who could rule that Gen Pinochet was immune from prosecution as a former head of state.

The decision was set aside after a hearing following a petition by Gen Pinochet's lawyers.

The court set aside one of its historic judgments because of bias against one of the parties.

The senior judge said an appeal would be heard by a different panel of judges, who could rule that Gen Pinochet was immune from prosecution as a former head of state.

The decision was set aside after a hearing following a petition by Gen Pinochet's lawyers.

The court set aside one of its historic judgments because of bias against one of the parties.

The senior judge said an appeal would be heard by a different panel of judges, who could rule that Gen Pinochet was immune from prosecution as a former head of state.

The decision was set aside after a hearing following a petition by Gen Pinochet's lawyers.

The court set aside one of its historic judgments because of bias against one of the parties.

The senior judge said an appeal would be heard by a different panel of judges, who could rule that Gen Pinochet was immune from prosecution as a former head of state.

The decision was set aside after a hearing following a petition by Gen Pinochet's lawyers.

The court set aside one of its historic judgments because of bias against one of the parties.

The senior judge said an appeal would be heard by a different panel of judges, who could rule that Gen Pinochet was immune from prosecution as a former head of state.

The case comes at a time when pressure is growing for more public scrutiny of judges in the run-up to implementation of the Human Rights Act, which will require them to adopt a more political role.

The five judges unanimously set aside the earlier Lords' decision. They held that Lord Hoffmann should have stood down because of his involvement in Pinochet's long campaign for Gen Pinochet to be tried, had been allowed to intervene, and, through his QC, pressed the case for denying immunity for crimes against humanity.

The decision was the first time a Lords judgment has been set aside, and allegations of a conflict of interest have never before been made against such a senior judge.

Lord Hoffmann, a director of Amnesty's fund-raising arm since 1990, on November 25 ruled with two other judges that immunity did not extend to crimes against humanity. It paved the way for the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, to start the process which could end in Gen Pinochet's extradition to Spain to stand trial for alleged human rights

crimes during his rule from 1973-90.

The case comes at a time when pressure is growing for more public scrutiny of judges in the run-up to implementation of the Human Rights Act, which will require them to adopt a more political role.

The five judges unanimously set aside the earlier Lords' decision. They held that Lord Hoffmann should have stood down because of his involvement in Pinochet's long campaign for Gen Pinochet to be tried, had been allowed to intervene, and, through his QC, pressed the case for denying immunity for crimes against humanity.

The decision was the first time a Lords judgment has been set aside, and allegations of a conflict of interest have never before been made against such a senior judge.

Lord Hoffmann, a director of Amnesty's fund-raising arm since 1990, on November 25 ruled with two other judges that immunity did not extend to crimes against humanity. It paved the way for the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, to start the process which could end in Gen Pinochet's extradition to Spain to stand trial for alleged human rights

crimes during his rule from 1973-90.

The case comes at a time when pressure is growing for more public scrutiny of judges in the run-up to implementation of the Human Rights Act, which will require them to adopt a more political role.

The five judges unanimously set aside the earlier Lords' decision. They held that Lord Hoffmann should have stood down because of his involvement in Pinochet's long campaign for Gen Pinochet to be tried, had been allowed to intervene, and, through his QC, pressed the case for denying immunity for crimes against humanity.

The decision was the first time a Lords judgment has been set aside, and allegations of a conflict of interest have never before been made against such a senior judge.

Lord Hoffmann, a director of Amnesty's fund-raising arm since 1990, on November 25 ruled with two other judges that immunity did not extend to crimes against humanity. It paved the way for the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, to start the process which could end in Gen Pinochet's extradition to Spain to stand trial for alleged human rights

crimes during his rule from 1973-90.

The case comes at a time when pressure is growing for more public scrutiny of judges in the run-up to implementation of the Human Rights Act, which will require them to adopt a more political role.

The five judges unanimously set aside the earlier Lords' decision. They held that Lord Hoffmann should have stood down because of his involvement in Pinochet's long campaign for Gen Pinochet to be tried, had been allowed to intervene, and, through his QC, pressed the case for denying immunity for crimes against humanity.

The decision was the first time a Lords judgment has been set aside, and allegations of a conflict of interest have never before been made against such a senior judge.

The Week in Britain James Lewis

MP claims newspaper editor was MI6 agent

Allegations that he had

been a "paid asset" of the intelligence service, MI6, were briskly

denied by Dominic Lawson, editor

of the Sunday Telegraph. He noted

that the suggestion had been made

by the Labour MP, Brian Sedgemoor, under the protection of parliamentary privilege. "Thus protecting

himself, and the newspapers that repeated his remarks, from mislearned friends, who would otherwise have been instructed to issue the mother of all libel writs."

Mr Sedgemoor did not properly specify, name Mr Lawson as an agent but said that the sacked, renegade ex-MI6 officer, Richard Tomlinson, had alleged that he was.

The thrust of the allegation was that, during his earlier relationship of The Spectator, he had published articles from Bosnia and Croatia, reporting to have been written by

one "Kenneth Roberts".

Mr Lawson, son of the former Tory Chancellor, Nigel Lawson, said at the time that this was the pseudonym of a UN adviser, who obviously could not write about the UN's role in Bosnia under his own name. The allegation is that "Kenneth Roberts" was in reality an MI6 agent, and Mr Lawson now concedes that this may be right, though he did not believe so at the time.

More entertaining was the way other newspapers embraced the allegation. Some made much of Mr Lawson's skill as a chess-player. "The mark of a scheming mind" and "an obvious wrong" was, according to Sherlock Holmes. The Times, which may also have been taken in by "Mr Roberts", noted that Mr Lawson was known "to keep detailed records of train times" — an odd sort of habit that would have aroused the suspicions of John

Buchan, if not one else.

A motion was tabled in the Commons demanding either that Mr Lawson should resign or that his paper's proprietor, Conrad Black, should sack him. But only six Labour MPs signed it.

Blondel Cluff is the wife of Algy Cluff, oil tycoon and chairman of the Spectator magazine, whose business partner is Conrad Black, owner of the Daily Telegraph. It was the Telegraph that published her dossier. The CRE's chairman, Sir Herman Ouseley, said Mrs Cluff was "a spurned woman" who had come to the commission with an agenda to shut it down.

Communication, Communications, was fined £2 million for its failed documentary, The Connection, which purported to disclose a drug cartel in heroin routes from South America to London. The Independent Television Commission found 10 "grave breaches" of its code, principally that "evidence for a new heroin route did not exist".

DANNY McNAMEE, jailed for the IRA Hyde Park bombing in 1982, said he felt vindicated when the Court of Appeal quashed his conviction on the grounds that the "evidence" was hearsay from three judges who reached that decision because they added that this did not mean he was innocent.

A motion was tabled in the prosecution had failed to disclose material evidence at the original trial. This, along with new scientific and fingerprint evidence, made the case for his acquittal. The Crown had, however, made out a strong case that McNamee "was indeed a conspirator to cause explosions, and it may very well be that... a jury would have still found him guilty."

Sentenced to 25 years for his part in the attack, which killed four men, the Crown had, however, made out a strong case that McNamee "was indeed a conspirator to cause explosions, and it may very well be that... a jury would have still found him guilty."

The report also records disturbing rises in the use of illegal drugs in eastern European countries, where the authorities have disproportionately fewer resources to deal with the problem.

Researchers found that seizures of cocaine in EU states had levelled out since 1994, after dropping in the previous decade, while there are also signs that ecstasy use may have levelled off. The use of heroin and cocaine is still on the increase.

THE ROYAL Opera House was given a long-awaited cash boost when the Arts Council increased its

funding over the next three years. The company's grant will rise by 11 per cent to £16 million next year, and then to £20 million in the two subsequent years.

Further good news came when the RCH music director, Sir Bernard Haitink, withdrew his resignation, suggesting that he, at least, sees light at the end of the tunnel. But the RCH, beset by disputes and managerial problems, is still not out of trouble. Its reopening has been set back from December 1999 to March 2000, and the grant is depending on the House opening on time and on budget.

Meanwhile there was concern that funding for many smaller theatre companies has been frozen to make cash available for the RCH.

THE internal rows of the prickly Commission for Racial Equality erupted in public when a dossier, highly critical of how the body is run, was sent to ministers by

Blondel Cluff, who lost her CRE post after a purge of members appointed by the former Tory Home Secretary, Michael Howard.

Mrs Cluff, a solicitor, claimed the CRE had a "destructive and dangerous" approach to race relations, was wasting public funds, and was riven by divisions. She alleged, among other things, that friction between Afro-Caribbean and Asian members led to discrimination within the CRE itself that it promoted an "aggressive and hostile" new relations ethos and gave greater encouragement to litigation than to conciliation.

Blondel Cluff is the wife of Algy Cluff, oil tycoon and chairman of the Spectator magazine, whose business partner is Conrad Black, owner of the Daily Telegraph. It was the Telegraph that published her dossier. The CRE's chairman, Sir Herman Ouseley, said Mrs Cluff was "a spurned woman" who had come to the commission with an agenda to shut it down.

Communication, Communications, was fined £2 million for its failed documentary, The Connection, which purported to disclose a drug cartel in heroin routes from South America to London. The Independent Television Commission found 10 "grave breaches" of its code, principally that "evidence for a new heroin route did not exist".

DANNY McNAMEE, jailed for the IRA Hyde Park bombing in 1982, said he felt vindicated when the Court of Appeal quashed his conviction on the grounds that the "evidence" was hearsay from three judges who reached that decision because they added that this did not mean he was innocent.

A motion was tabled in the prosecution had failed to disclose material evidence at the original trial. This, along with new scientific and fingerprint evidence, made the case for his acquittal. The Crown had, however, made out a strong case that McNamee "was indeed a conspirator to cause explosions, and it may very well be that... a jury would have still found him guilty."

Sentenced to 25 years for his part in the attack, which killed four men, the Crown had, however, made out a strong case that McNamee "was indeed a conspirator to cause explosions, and it may very well be that... a jury would have still found him guilty."

The report also records disturbing rises in the use of illegal drugs in eastern European countries, where the authorities have disproportionately fewer resources to deal with the problem.

Researchers found that seizures of cocaine in EU states had levelled out since 1994, after dropping in the previous decade, while there are also signs that ecstasy use may have levelled off. The use of heroin and cocaine is still on the increase.

THE ROYAL Opera House was given a long-awaited cash boost when the Arts Council increased its

funding over the next three years. The company's grant will rise by 11 per cent to £16 million next year, and then to £20 million in the two subsequent years.

Further good news came when the RCH music director, Sir Bernard Haitink, withdrew his resignation, suggesting

State pensions boost for low-paid

David Brindle

LOW-PAID workers would win a "dramatic" increase in state support in retirement under £5 billion pension reforms unveiled last week by the Social Security Secretary, Alistair Darling.

A state second pension would at least double the value of the existing state earnings-related scheme (SERPS) for 4 million employees earning less than £20,000 a year, the minister promised.

Abolition of SERPS was the surprise in a Green Paper which stressed that of compelling workers to put more money aside for their old age, the state second pension would at least double the value of the existing state earnings-related scheme (SERPS) for 4 million employees earning less than £20,000 a year, the minister promised.

The link of compulsion raised doubts in the pensions industry about the effectiveness of the strategy, which appears to be a markedly less radical blueprint than had been foreshadowed. There was also disappointment among welfare groups working with older people.

Key points

- 20 per cent of average earnings to be minimum retirement income
- State second pension to replace SERPS, doubling value for low-paid
- Credits for 4 million carers and disabled ex-workers
- Low-cost statehood pension aimed at 5 million people without occupational schemes
- Bigger incentives for moderate earners to leave state scheme and take out stakeholder occupational pensions
- Higher earners unaffected

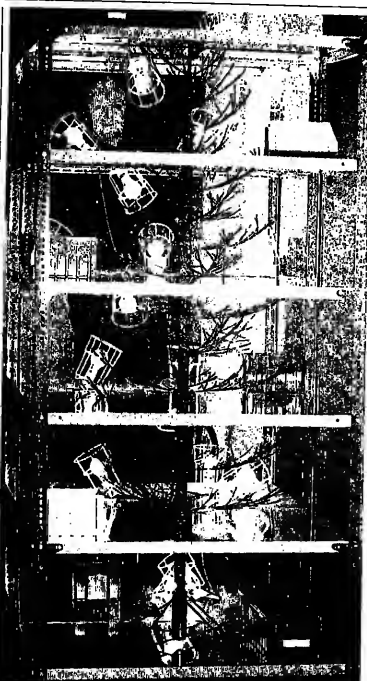
By contrast, there was a warm welcome from carers' organisations for confirmation that ministers plan to give pension credits, under the new state second scheme, to people looking after dependent relatives or children under five, and to long-term disabled people with broken employment records.

At least 4 million people, mostly women, are expected to benefit from these credits by 2050. They would be treated as if they had annual earnings of £9,000, and their pensions would be boosted by up to £20 a week in today's terms.

The pensions overhaul has been triggered by official forecasts that on present trends, one in three pensioners could be depending on income support by the middle of the next century. Previous attempts to encourage workers to make greater provision for themselves have been mixed results. Moreover, SERPS is considered by the Government to do little for the low-paid because it is "inverted".

The Green Paper sets a target of 20 per cent of average earnings, or £75 a week in current terms, as a minimum "income for the retired". From next April this will be a "guarantee" for people — though they will still have to claim an income support top-up of their basic state pension to get it. Thereafter, ministers say their aim is to raise the guarantee broadly in line with earnings while the basic pension increases only with prices.

By 2050, it is forecast, the balance of total pension costs would have switched from the present 60-40 percentage split between state and private sources to one of 40-60.



Christmas shelved

SOME grey metal shelving, new buildings' lamp, ... welcome to Christmas, the Gullery style, writes Dan Glatier.

After last year's wheeled-in and 1993's tree being up and down, this year's Tute Christmas tree, by artist Richard Wilson (1971), conveys a rather subtle message. Certainly it attracts little attention from visitors, most of whom seemed to assume that it was part of the gallery's curatorial development building work.

The structure of shelving — incorporating a metal Christmas tree and lamp — making through the gallery's shelves — intentionally carries no message, according to the artist.

"It doesn't actually mean anything," said Wilson, who for his oil tank installation at the National Gallery, and for doing a large hole in the floor of the Serpentine Gallery. "There's a message. It just means it's Christmas. Actually it's a relief not to overburden the general public with too much."

There was, however, a possible subtext, he conceded. "In some ways I suppose it's a sense of contemporary visual art. The shelving unit as a storage mechanism to echo a museum itself as a storage place for art. But it's not a statement about the commercialisation of Christmas or anything like that. It's quite simple and fun."

The Christmas tree, the gallery's 11th seasonal offering, is on show until January 5.

Loyalist group first to hand in arms

John Mullin

THE Loyalist Volunteer Force last week became the first terrorist group in Northern Ireland to decommission some of its weapons.

The force's move came hours after the political parties finally agreed the shape of the proposed power-sharing executive of the scope for the cross-border talks envisaged in the Good Friday agreement. There is, though, a sign of the IRA following the LVF's move which would clear the way for Sinn Féin to take up its place in government.

The LVF this year killed a number of Catholics after the Irish Liberation Army's murder of a man near White Wagon, the base prison a year ago. Its campaign threatened to wreck the peace process.

It continued in the murder in March of two friends, one Catholic and one Protestant, in Portlough, Co. Armagh. One of the suspected murderers, believed by his colleagues to be a police informer, was murdered at the Maze.

Factor: Kenny MacCloskey, a convicted terrorist, was involved in the "Christianity while in prison" was the LVF's link to the international Body on Decommissioning, headed by the Canadian General John de Chastelain. The LVF declared its ceasefire permanent in August, and last month its members were ruled eligible for the release programme, part of the agreement.

Northern Ireland's First Minister, David Trimble, welcomed the move. He believed it would put pressure on the IRA to start a start. "They will exclude themselves if they do not subscribe fully to the agreement. This is no time for fog-dragging."

The LVF's move, he said, was a "step in the right direction". He said the LVF's move was a "step in the right direction". He said the LVF's move was a "step in the right direction".



A member of the Independent decommissioning body destroys a weapon handed in by the LVF

McClinton was escorted under armed guard from Portadown to Rose Park, the decommissioning body's headquarters near Stormont. He was armed with the nine guns, 350 bullets, two blast bombs, and a quantity of explosive were handed over and the first two guns were cut into pieces.

Political leaders agreed that there will be 10 ministries replacing the six Northern Ireland departments. Unionists and nationalists will each run two. They are agriculture; environment; regional development; education; further education; enterprise, trade and investment; culture, arts and leisure; health and social services; finance, and personnel.

There will be six cross-border bodies: inland waterways; food safety; trade and business development; special EU programmes; language — Irish and Ulster-Scots; and marine matters.

Meanwhile Tony Blair launched his strongest attack on the Tories for criticising his handling of Northern Ireland, dealing the bipartisan approach to the peace process a fresh blow.

The Prime Minister challenged the Tories not to "play politics" with the peace process at a sensitive time in the negotiations.

Mr Blair hit out at the Tories in the Commons after Oliver Letwin, MP for Dorset West, criticised the Government for releasing paramilitary prisoners in the absence of any disarmament by the IRA.

Mr Letwin asked: "Do you believe it's an ethical policy to have released every IRA murderer without achieving the decommissioning of a single armament?"

An angry Mr Blair retorted off a list of occasions when Labour in opposition supported John Major's government at difficult moments during the early years of the peace process. "We supported the previous government all the way through. We never once played politics with



A member of the Independent decommissioning body destroys a weapon handed in by the LVF

for criticising his handling of Northern Ireland, dealing the bipartisan approach to the peace process a fresh blow.

The Prime Minister challenged the Tories not to "play politics" with the peace process at a sensitive time in the negotiations.

Mr Blair hit out at the Tories in the Commons after Oliver Letwin, MP for Dorset West, criticised the Government for releasing paramilitary prisoners in the absence of any disarmament by the IRA.

Mr Letwin asked: "Do you believe it's an ethical policy to have released every IRA murderer without achieving the decommissioning of a single armament?"

An angry Mr Blair retorted off a list of occasions when Labour in opposition supported John Major's government at difficult moments during the early years of the peace process. "We supported the previous government all the way through. We never once played politics with

for criticising his handling of Northern Ireland, dealing the bipartisan approach to the peace process a fresh blow.

The Prime Minister challenged the Tories not to "play politics" with the peace process at a sensitive time in the negotiations.

Mr Blair hit out at the Tories in the Commons after Oliver Letwin, MP for Dorset West, criticised the Government for releasing paramilitary prisoners in the absence of any disarmament by the IRA.

Mr Letwin asked: "Do you believe it's an ethical policy to have released every IRA murderer without achieving the decommissioning of a single armament?"

An angry Mr Blair retorted off a list of occasions when Labour in opposition supported John Major's government at difficult moments during the early years of the peace process. "We supported the previous government all the way through. We never once played politics with

for criticising his handling of Northern Ireland, dealing the bipartisan approach to the peace process a fresh blow.

The Prime Minister challenged the Tories not to "play politics" with the peace process at a sensitive time in the negotiations.

Mr Blair hit out at the Tories in the Commons after Oliver Letwin, MP for Dorset West, criticised the Government for releasing paramilitary prisoners in the absence of any disarmament by the IRA.

that issue, and I hope your party will do the same thing.

Ministers believe that Andrew Mackay, shadow Northern Ireland secretary, is in danger of strengthening the hands of unionists opposed to the agreement with his demand to halt the release of prisoners until paramilitaries start to disarm. The Government is exasperated with the way that Mr Mackay supported the agreement only to introduce preconditions that were not part of the deal.

At the same time the Orange Order is to consider disciplining Mr Trimble for attending the funerals of three young victims of the Omagh bombing. Denis Rogan, Ulster Unionist party chairman, is also facing action.

Mr Trimble, leader of the UUP, which has institutional links with the Orange Order, was disabused of the planned action against him. He and Mr Rogan attended the funeral mass at St Mary's Church in Siontown, where the bodies of the three young victims were buried.

They were applauded as they entered. The Irish president, Mary McAleese, and the Sinn Féin president, Gerry Adams, also attended.

A condition of Orange membership is that "you should not countenance by your presence or otherwise any act or ceremony of 'Loyalist worship'".

Mr Trimble's withdrawal of support for the Portadown Orangemen at Drumcree in 1995 was a factor in his winning the party leadership two months later, and many hard liners believe their constituency MP has let them down.

Tensions were rising again in Northern Ireland last weekend over a loyalist group calling itself the Orange Volunteers claimed responsibility for bombing a Catholic-owned bar in Crumlin, Co. Antrim last week. There were no injuries.

The bar was the first such attack since the Real IRA's atrocity at Omagh, which killed 29 people four months ago.

At least 5,000 Orangemen and supporters paraded amid light security in Portadown last weekend as part of the continued protest against being denied the right to march down the town's nationalist Garvaghy Road to Drumcree parish church during the summer.

Mr Blair hit out at the Tories in the Commons after Oliver Letwin, MP for Dorset West, criticised the Government for releasing paramilitary prisoners in the absence of any disarmament by the IRA.

Mr Letwin asked: "Do you believe it's an ethical policy to have released every IRA murderer without achieving the decommissioning of a single armament?"

An angry Mr Blair retorted off a list of occasions when Labour in opposition supported John Major's government at difficult moments during the early years of the peace process. "We supported the previous government all the way through. We never once played politics with

for criticising his handling of Northern Ireland, dealing the bipartisan approach to the peace process a fresh blow.

The Prime Minister challenged the Tories not to "play politics" with the peace process at a sensitive time in the negotiations.

Mr Blair hit out at the Tories in the Commons after Oliver Letwin, MP for Dorset West, criticised the Government for releasing paramilitary prisoners in the absence of any disarmament by the IRA.

Mr Letwin asked: "Do you believe it's an ethical policy to have released every IRA murderer without achieving the decommissioning of a single armament?"

An angry Mr Blair retorted off a list of occasions when Labour in opposition supported John Major's government at difficult moments during the early years of the peace process. "We supported the previous government all the way through. We never once played politics with

for criticising his handling of Northern Ireland, dealing the bipartisan approach to the peace process a fresh blow.

In Brief

WESTMINSTER council decided against handing out compensation claims to employees implicated in the "homes for voters" scandal as there was legal doubt about the authority's right to grant the money.

TOUGH measures designed to protect fish stocks have left Britain's fishing industry facing a further reduction in catches next year, even though the Government managed to reduce the cuts proposed by the European Commission.

IN A test case the Court of Appeal opened the way for discrimination claims against employers if they refuse to allow sick leave to mothers who are ill when their maternity leave ends.

PHILIP DUNNE, a former house parent at a boarding school, was jailed for 11 years, to join other victims who after 20 years came forward to expose this cruelly and sexual abuse.

JOH applicants will be asked to provide proof of a "clean" criminal record under measures to curb child abuse. Employers will have the right to insist job applicants produce a certificate showing any criminal past from a Criminal Records Bureau, to be set up within two years.

MONSANTO, the multinational company that specialises in marketing genetically modified crops, is to be prosecuted following the deliberate release of modified oilseed rape into the countryside.

NUCLEAR waste stored at 22 sites containing plutonium is in danger of leaking, the Government's safety experts say.

LUCILLE McLaughlin, the nurse imprisoned in a Saudi jail for her part in the murder of an Australian colleague, is on trial accused of stealing a bank card from a patient in her care.

JANE ROOTH has become the BBC's first female channel controller as head of BBC2.

A 12 YEAR-OLD girl was charged with murder following the death of a 16-month-old girl who sustained injuries while left in her care in Manchester.

SERVICES of commemoration were held in New York and London to remember the victims of the Pan Am air crash 10 years ago.

THE SPICE Girls have topped the Christmas singles chart for the third year running with their Goodbye single.

SIR ALAN Hodgkin, a Nobel laureate in physiology and medicine, has died aged 84.

Met police officers in anti-corruption drive

AN anti-corruption strategy launched last week by the Metropolitan police includes inspecting private bank accounts of officers joining specialist squads, and encouraging all officers to inform on corrupt colleagues, writes Duncan Campbell.

Sir Paul Condon, the Met's commissioner, described the strategy as the most comprehensive in the world, aiming to end the cyclical nature of corruption. "No one should underestimate our determination to pursue relentlessly and prosecute corrupt and dishonest members of staff, either past or present, and those who seek to entrap our colleagues," said Sir Paul.

Sir Paul said he did not believe

that officers joined the police with dishonest motives. "It's about good people who have come into policing and along the way have gone bad."

More than 80 criminal charges and suspensions have been investigated in the Met's investigation. The strategy aims to develop new systems as an alternative way to pass information on corruption to investigating officers: allow checks on bank accounts of officers seeking to join specialist squads; confiscate any assets gained as a result of dishonesty; carry out "integrity tests" to root out corruption, racism and sexism.

Meanwhile a police force humiliated by some of the most notorious sex discrimination cases of recent

years lost another, when one of its former women officers was vindicated by an industrial tribunal.

Claims of prejudice up to the level of a force dinner, and alleged abuse of North Yorkshire's former chief constable were upheld in the case brought by retired Chief Inspector Lyn Smith, aged 46, who left the force on medical grounds earlier this year.

She listed a catalogue of blocked promotion, humiliating sex jokes at a force dinner, and alleged queries by former chief constable David Burke about whether she was a lesbian.

Welcoming the verdict, Ms Smith emphasised that she wished North Yorkshire police well and had every confidence in the regime installed this year, when Mr Burke retired.

Hijacking convictions quashed for refugees

Duncan Campbell

RIGHTS campaigners last week secured a Court of Appeal decision to quash convictions against six Iraqis who hijacked a plane to Britain from Sudan.

The decision is seen as setting a precedent for refugees of brutal regimes. The court held that the judge at the men's trial had wrongly prevented the jury considering their defence that they acted under "duress of circumstances".

Delivering his ruling, Lord Justice Rose said: "If Anne Frank had stolen a car to escape from Amsterdam and had been charged with theft, the tenets of English law would not have prevented her defence of duress of circumstances on the ground that she should have avoided the Gestapo's knock at the door."

The six men from Iraq were jailed at the Old Bailey in November last year for terms of between five and nine years. While the judge, Mr Justice Wright, expressed sympathy for their predicament, he ruled out the duress defence on the grounds that there had to be a close connection in time between a feared threat of injury and any criminal act.

The men had fled from Iraq and were fugitives in Sudan when they boarded a Sudan Airways aircraft in August 1996. Using knives and imitation grenades they took control of

the plane and its 197 passengers and crew for 20 hours before a hijack at Stansted in Essex.

John Wadhwan, director of the Iraqis, said the ruling set a major precedent. "All too often the courts mean they can dispense justice, but on the same day the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, unveiled and terrorist powers to make it illegal to cause serious injury or damage to property."

On the same day the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, unveiled and terrorist powers to make it illegal to cause serious injury or damage to property.

The proposed powers make it a criminal offence to be a member of or support of such proscribed organisations. Tough action will also be taken against those who raise funds for the groups. At the Old Bailey, the men were charged with terrorism, but proposes to abolish the use of internal exclusion orders to the rest of the UK.

It will mean the end of the annual renewal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Mr Straw is to make a speech on the subject of terrorism, but proposes to abolish the use of internal exclusion orders to the rest of the UK.

The men had fled from Iraq and were fugitives in Sudan when they boarded a Sudan Airways aircraft in August 1996. Using knives and imitation grenades they took control of

the plane and its 197 passengers and crew for 20 hours before a hijack at Stansted in Essex.

John Wadhwan, director of the Iraqis, said the ruling set a major precedent. "All too often the courts mean they can dispense justice, but on the same day the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, unveiled and terrorist powers to make it illegal to cause serious injury or damage to property."

On the same day the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, unveiled and terrorist powers to make it illegal to cause serious injury or damage to property.

The proposed powers make it a criminal offence to be a member of or support of such proscribed organisations. Tough action will also be taken against those who raise funds for the groups. At the Old Bailey, the men were charged with terrorism, but proposes to abolish the use of internal exclusion orders to the rest of the UK.

Short refused malaria aid

Patrick Wintour

CLAIRE SHORT, the international development secretary, has provoked fury among aid workers by rejecting an appeal for government aid to compensate Sudan for losing half its capacity to produce malaria drugs.

The request had been made by Lady Bingham, wife of the Lord Chief Justice, and had been backed by the British Red Cross.

Sudan's drug-making capacity was severely damaged when US troops bombed — with British support — the al-Shifa factory, hence outside the capital, in September 1996. It has since been widely reported that the raid was based on a hope that the al-Shifa factory was involved in the production of chemical weapons.

The al-Shifa plant near Khartoum provided 50 per cent of Sudan's medicines, and its destruction has left the country with no supplies of chemotherapy, the standard treatment for malaria.

Elizabeth Bingham said: "The cost of supplying these drugs is peanuts, and given that Clare Short's department is committed to halving the number of people suffering poverty in the world, and poverty includes not being able to buy something that could save you from malaria, I think we should act."

Lady Bingham warned that recent floods in Sudan had led to a proliferation of mosquitoes and hence the drug would cost about £25,000.

But Ms Short rejected her request, saying her department this year had already set aside more than £5.5 million to various humanitarian groups in Sudan. It was up to them to ensure malaria control was properly organised. — *The Observer*

Lords vote over-ruled

Michael Whitham

CONSERVATIVE opponents of the Government's troubled European Elections Bill last week ensured it will become law when they voted to deny it a second reading in the Lords because it enshrines the closed list system of proportional voting.

The paradoxical consequence of their 167-73 vote majority, which was greeted with ironic cheers, is that the bill they annulled five times in the last session, is now officially stalled between the Lords and Commons, more than 12 months after it won its original reading in the elected House.

As such, it qualifies for immediate passage into law under the terms of the Parliament Acts of 1911 and 1949, passed to stop Tory peers blocking a radical Liberal budget, and only need votes once — the last time being in 1981 when Margaret

Thatcher insisted on passing the War Crimes Act.

It means that June's European elections will take place under the regional list PR system. It will have the effect of giving Conservatives and Liberal Democrats more Strasbourg seats at the expense of Labour.

Privately, both sides are probably glad to get off the hook via what the Liberal Democrats called a "procedural pantomime". The PR row in the Lords became mixed up with the larger issue of Lords reform, and led to the sacking of Lord Cranborne over an unauthorised deal with Tony Blair to retrieve 81 hereditary peers.

Lord Jenkin of Hillhead, the Lib Dem peer, said closed lists denied voters choice and was a minor evil. "But to lose a bill and to go on with the old disfigurement — a totally bad message into law under the terms of the Parliament Acts of 1911 and 1949, passed to stop Tory peers blocking a radical Liberal budget, and only need votes once — the last time being in 1981 when Margaret

Thatcher insisted on passing the War Crimes Act.

It means that June's European elections will take place under the regional list PR system. It will have the effect of giving Conservatives and Liberal Democrats more Strasbourg seats at the expense of Labour.

Privately, both sides are probably glad to get off the hook via what the Liberal Democrats called a "procedural pantomime". The PR row in the Lords became mixed up with the larger issue of Lords reform, and led to the sacking of Lord Cranborne over an unauthorised deal with Tony Blair to retrieve 81 hereditary peers.

Iraq raids heighten crisis of leadership

A lot is being riaked here, beginning with the reputations of individual politicians. President Clinton is a lost cause, but Tony Blair could also lose a lot of his political capital if the campaign against Saddam Hussein goes wrong in the sense that further suffering is inflicted on Iraq without achieving his removal. Nobody will

The absence of specific UN mandates should not, as Kosovo arguably showed, ways be allowed to become an obstacle necessary action. But was the bombing

Making a fool of the law

If before last month's hearing Lord Hoffman had declared his links to a charity that promotes some of Amnesty's

One can only hope that the next panel of how lords will take the view, ideally unanimously, that General Pinochet does not have the immunity he claims. Whether they do or not, last week's victory of tactics over principle has unnecessarily interrupted the search for justice.

Yet a certain ambiguity emerges from the report's 366 pages. The line the MPs take is that France was caught in a "trap" in Rwanda. The report details the painful chain of events that led up to the massacres but tries to prove that at every stage of the process Paris had a good reason to take decisions that subsequently proved unwise.

Quilès and his colleagues conclude that an "overall error of strategy" was the only mistake that France made.

Although the first 300 pages

That France was not directly responsible for the killings is one thing. That it did not, through intensive military support, give the murderers a feeling of impunity quite another.

It is only normal for a parliamentary Information mission, on such issues as arms deliveries, to restrict itself to official documents and not to plunge into the murky world of arms traffickers. But on other questions, it could have shown greater perception.

The report notes how deeply involved the French army was in the decision of the Dupontet and

Induced, its soldiers worked side-side with the Hutu army. "How could France have become strongly committed," the report asks, "that one French soldier should have been killed in the line of operational assistance through the hands of his own countrymen under his orders, he was leading and indirectly commanding army, in this case the army of foreigners?" The question remains unanswered.

How did France get itself into such a fix? The impression given by the report, and by Quilès's remarks to the media, is that France was the prime mover in reviving the Mbuti investigations, did not really put foot wrong. There is a huge discrepancy between reports of edifying factual chapters and some of its conclusions.

To particularize the president of time, the late François Mitterrand gets off fairly lightly, whereas all indications are that it was he who masterminded France's policy in Rwanda.

For the moment, while breaking a

group, is only one stage in the process of microwaving the truth about French involvement in Rwanda. But it marks an important first step. It is the first time that the French have agreed to poke their noses into the Rwandan's "private preserve." Confidential defense documents were not available to them, and two-thirds of the hearings that took place in camera have been withheld.

MF's also took advantage of the investigation of the Rwandan to demand that certain new legislative mechanisms should be put in place to strengthen the parliament of foreign military operations.

There is likely to be a mounting demand for greater transparency in such areas as foreign military operations, arms sales, and the use of mercenaries. This would turn out to be a key initiative that would prevent France, in future, from embarking on small escapades without analyzing the risks involved. The new regime was keeping the public in the dark.

(December 1977)

foreign aid remains at a healthy level, but \$500 million of it is committed on the introduction of reforms, notably in the inflamed, union-busting public sector. But there is an area that Hanoi is reluctant to tackle. It believes reforms should be implemented step by step. Over the past few months, the Communist party's priority has apparently been to prevent a "rural implosion".

It is, however, worshipping the devil. In 1997 protests and movements sprang up in several rural areas, mostly against corrupt local authorities. The CP lists this as a failure because the countryside lives because the land provides a livelihood for 80 per cent of the population.

Another problem surfacing is the party's waning authority. Some leading communist figures, such as Trần Dò, a retired general who has a lot of influence among young CP cadres, feel it is vital to democratise the movement. They do not seem to have been overimpressed by the release of several political and religious prisoners just before the ASEAN summit.

While countries such as Thailand, hardest hit by the crisis, are busy restructuring, Vietnam has intention of speeding up the pace of reform. That reluctance could adversely affect its greatest asset - large, hard-working and extremely cheap labour pool.

Moreover the 15 per cent devaluation of the national currency, the dong, in the space of 18 months is no longer big enough to ensure competition from Vietnam's neighbours, whose currencies have been devalued by a far greater amount.

Despite that, the Vietnamese government does not share the sense of urgency manifested by its foreign business partners. Twelve years have elapsed since the decision to open up the country to investment and tourism. During that period, both the urban and rural landscapes have changed radically.

Even as clouds seem to be gathering on the horizon, the communist leadership remains fearful of changes. If too audacious, they threaten their grip on power. (December 17)

helters, US planning for a post-Saddam Iraq was shown up as amateurish and inadequate. The world may be forgiven for believing that these past deficiencies cannot be made up for now by a few bombing raids.

The problem is the contrast between the often lightweight nature of US and British politics, and the heavyweight nature of the issues. That families in New York and London went about buying Christmas presents while Iraqi families were in fear of their lives sums it up on one level. The impeachment procedure against Clinton, even as the bombs were falling on Iraq, sums it up on another. The Russian Duma discussion of whether or not to appeal to Monica Lewinsky to help stop the raids on Iraq takes it into the zone of parody.

One nation's irresponsibility feeds another's. It is deplorable for Russian legislators to say that they will throw out measures of nuclear disarmament in order to thumb their noses at the US over Iraq.

You cannot have this kind of slapstick going on while bombs are falling without feeling a sense of great unease. The war fought for elementary political advantage is now such an entertainment staple that the sea lurks behind every explanation and analysis.

Bill Clinton more and more resembling a hurt boy to his demeanour encourages such thoughts. We feel sorry for him, but we should fear he is in charge. And we doubt his judgment. He himself knows the value of a throw-the-credibility-in-the-air

cent decisions on Iraq on to his ministers and advisers. And it is on them that we are in effect depending for the consistency and seriousness of policy that alone can justify last week's raids. Blar and the US Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, can be added to that number.

These attacks on Iraq cannot be defended in themselves or only as part of a determined policy to remove Saddam. But most opponents of the raids, well aware of US unreliability, are far from sure that this new campaign will materialise, much less whether it will work.

The burden on the US and British governments is to prove them wrong, and to show that American power and the proper management of international affairs can be brought to bear in the defence of innocent civilians.

Pursuing a disastrous policy on Iraq

EDITORIAL

THE United States's decision to use force against Iraq was flawed in every respect. It was flawed in its form: the United Nations Security Council was not consulted, even though Washington claimed to be acting on behalf of the international community.

What exactly did Butler say? That Iraq had not "fully" allowed his inspectors to do their work. That Iraq had jammed UN Security Council helicopters' radio transmissions. That he had moved documents about a suspected chemical weapons plant out of a kept certain sensitive sites out of bounds to his inspectors.

In all, Iraq is thought to have prevented half a dozen sizeable operations out of more than 100 carried out by Unacom over the past four weeks. That is a justification for resorting to the massive use of force against a country that has already brought to its knees.

The decision seems even justified when it is remembered that, on the same day, Butler handed in his report to another organisation operating in Iraq, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), demanded its own report — which came to precisely the opposite conclusion.

IAEA agents said that Iraq co-operated sufficiently with them for them to observe something that, almost no one disputes any more: that Saddam Hussein's regime is less

Nor does anyone dispute the fact that, thanks to Unascom, no longer has more than a handful of long-range missiles in its possession.

No army command in the region, whether it be the Iranian or Israeli, feels militarily threatened by Iraq, even though it is generally recognised that Saddam's army has almost

proved himself a serious troublemaker, Iraq probably doing its best to hang on to some of its chemical and biological weapons.

But what incentive is there for him to comply with UN resolutions on dismantling Iraq's weapons? The obvious answer is the avowed aim of the UN: to overthrow him?

Justified in neither form nor content, the decision to ban Iraq was also dangerous. It is no doubt having the effect of making Unacom's operations

which was our best guarantee
getting Iraq to disarm.

After being boosted by President Bill Clinton's appeal in Gaza on December 14, the image of the US in the Middle East reverted within a matter of days to what it has always been — that of a major power who uses double standards, depending on whether it is Israel or the Arab states that violate Security Council resolutions.

For all these reasons — apart from the so-called "civilian" (read: civilian) casualties of the bombing — the US alone could turn out to be a troupe. But then disastrous is only word which, for much long now, has been applicable to overall US policy towards Iraq. (December 18)

While countries such as Thailand, hardest hit by the crisis, are busy restructuring, Vietnam has intention of speeding up the pace of reform. That reluctance could adversely affect its greatest asset - large, hard-working and extremely cheap labour pool.

Moreover the 15 per cent devaluation of the national currency, the dong, in the space of 18 months is no longer be enough to ensure competition from Vietnam's neighbours, whose currencies have been devalued by a far greater amount.

...Despite that, the Vietnamese communist does not share the sense of urgency manifested by its foreign business partners. Twelve years have elapsed since the decision was made to open the country to investment and tourism. During that period, both the urban and rural landscapes have changed radically.

Even no clouds seem to be hovering on the horizon, but communist leadership remains fearful of changes, if too audacious, that threaten their grip on power.

(December 17)